

TO: Honorable Members of the Legislative Fiscal Committee

FROM: Gloria J. Gibson 
Executive Vice President and Provost
University of Northern Iowa

DATE: November 4, 2013

RE: Bachelor of Applied Science Degree

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is committed to promoting economic development in the state of Iowa. As a result, UNI has developed a strong pathway for community college graduates to earn a four-year degree. Indeed, about a third of the UNI student body is comprised of transfer students. This commitment is reinforced by the fact that more than 90% of UNI's students are from Iowa, and the vast majority of UNI's graduates stay and work in Iowa. Thus, UNI can act as an important conduit for Iowa's community college students as they work toward their four-year degrees and ultimately enter the workforce.

To build on this, UNI intends to establish a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree. This degree would be of interest to community college graduates who have earned an Associate's of Applied Science degree and who intend on completing a four-year degree. Currently, students with an AAS degree who transfer to UNI are subject to an array of articulation agreements, which creates confusion among UNI, the sending community colleges, and the students. This is in contrast to the relatively easy transfer of students with Associate of Arts degree, which automatically are counted as an equivalent to UNI's Liberal Arts Core (essentially the first two years of a standard four-year bachelor's degree). BAS degrees have been successfully used in many universities for this purpose, including the University of Iowa, so there are good models to follow as we develop our degree programs.

NATURE OF THE BAS DEGREE

The BAS degree program offerings will include areas that directly build upon the student's experiences as community college AAS graduates. These will tend to be in the more "applied" or "professional" programs at UNI. Many of these areas are particular strengths at UNI, which will make these programs more attractive to students, and more valuable to the state in terms of graduating skilled workers ready to enter the workforce in high-need and high-paid positions.

These program areas can include:

- Technology
- Gerontology
- Health Promotion, Public Health, and Allied Health
- Textiles and Apparel
- Family Services
- Social Work
- Criminology
- Business: Marketing, Management Information, and/or Entrepreneurialism

RESOURCE NEEDS

To successfully launch these programs under the new BAS degree, UNI will need additional resources. Additional funding is needed to ensure that laboratory space, clinical space, and equipment across the participating departments is in place and ready to accommodate incoming students. Faculty and staff development will also be needed, as curricula and courses are developed for the programs. Finally, faculty and staff will need to be hired to be in place and ready as these programs are launched.

CONCLUSION

UNI is confident that the new BAS degree, and the programs within it, will provide a valuable new pathway for Iowa's community college students who are seeking to enhance their skills and knowledge so that they will be more effective in the workforce. The new BAS degree will also smooth the transition of students with AAS degrees from community colleges to UNI, reducing confusion and time-to-degree. Thus, the new degree and the programs within it will not only support economic development in the state, they will also directly serve the college students in Iowa.

Timeline for Development of Bachelor of Applied Science Degree

Fall semester, 2013:

- Initial planning meetings to determine program areas for the B.A.S.
- Faculty discussions regarding curriculum development begin

Spring semester, 2014:

- Curriculum development continues in UNI's curriculum review process to include departmental and college approvals
- Resource needs are identified to include faculty, staff, equipment, and physical space

Summer and Fall, 2014 (first half of FY15):

- Curriculum development continues in UNI's curriculum review process, to include approvals by University Curriculum Committee and submission to Faculty Senate
- Identify faculty member(s) to work directly with community colleges to ensure smooth transition (must fund release time for faculty)
- Begin hiring staff to prepare for implementation of new B.A.S. programs, such as an overall Program Coordinator, advisors, lab technicians, and other clerical staff that may be needed. These personnel will be hired in advance of the actual start dates of the programs to ensure a successful launch.
- Begin searches for program faculty for Fall 2015 start dates
- Identify faculty development needs
- Develop marketing campaign

Spring semester, 2015 (second half of FY15):

- Curriculum development continues, to include approvals by Faculty Senate, Council of Provosts, Education and Student Affairs Committee, and Board of Regents. After BOR approval, recruiting begins.
- Complete hiring of support staff.
- Complete purchases of equipment.
- Complete preparations of physical space.
- Complete searches for new faculty who will start in Fall semester, 2015

Summer and Fall, 2015 (first half of FY16):

- New programs are launched
- New faculty are in place
- On-going operating expenses include faculty and staff salaries, plus supplies and services budget.